

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2009



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Railroad Museum Announces Exhibit Partnership With National Model Railroad Association

Sacramento, CA -- After five years of research, planning, and exploration, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and California State Parks have signed a Memorandum of Understanding paving the way for development of a model railroading exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM). This MOU anticipates a 3,500 square foot model railroading exhibit to be designed and constructed by the NMRA in CSRM's Roundhouse Gallery, adjacent to the widely acclaimed "Small Wonders: The Magic of Toy Trains" exhibit which debuted in 2004.

With a working title of "The Magic of Scale Model Railroading," the proposed new exhibit will complement the subject matter already covered in CSRM's "Small Wonders" toy train exhibit. It will trace the fascinating hobby of scale model railroading from the early 19th century—when American railroads were just getting started—to the present. Spectacular and inspiring examples of vintage models created in machine shops will be included, contrasted with today's highest quality models and layouts to illustrate the constantly changing nature of this fascinating hobby and pastime. This new exhibit is expected to generate additional guest interest and increased visitation for the Museum.

The California State Railroad Museum, located at Old Sacramento State Historic Park, is an internationally known attraction operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit CSRM Foundation. Open daily, the Museum is widely regarded as the most popular of its kind in North America, attracting some 600,000 visitors annually. In addition to a changing array of exhibits and special events scheduled throughout the year, the Museum also operates steam-powered excursion trains every weekend April-September.

"The California State Railroad Museum is thrilled to partner with the National Model Railroad Association on this new initiative," said Museum Director Paul Hammond. "We see this as a natural complement to the Museum's permanent exhibit *Small Wonders: The Magic of Toy Trains*, which has proven to be very popular not only with collectors but also with families of all ages. We're also delighted to partner with the National Model Railroad Association in bringing the heritage and delight of scale model railroading to life for our many guests."

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The National Model Railroad Association is one of the largest model railroad organizations in the world. Organized in Milwaukee in 1935, the NMRA has 20,000 members worldwide and has been instrumental in setting industry standards to ensure interchangeability of model railroad products, as well as fostering knowledge and teaching its members how to improve their skills as model railroaders. The model railroading hobby continues to be one of the most popular in the United States, with an estimated 250,000 active participants.

“We at the NMRA see this as a fantastic opportunity to tell the interesting story of scale model railroading in a world class railroad museum”, said Mike Brestel, President of the NMRA. “This is a wonderful opportunity for the general public to discover not only the history, but the exciting possibilities of this fascinating hobby. Given that no comprehensive museum dedicated to the story of scale model railroading currently exists, the NMRA is very excited to be partnering with the California State Railroad Museum to bring this concept to life.”

The proposed exhibit is expected to cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to develop, with the NMRA providing the necessary funding. In addition to pursuing development of this new scale model railroading exhibit, the parties have additionally agreed to explore possible relocation of the NMRA’s library collection, currently housed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Sacramento. The collection would be administered by the staff of the California State Railroad Museum Library, also located at Old Sacramento State Historic Park. Open Tuesday-Saturday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., the CSRM Library is North America’s largest railroad-specific research and reference library.

For more information about the California State Railroad Museum, visit www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org. For more information about the National Model Railroad Association, visit www.nmra.org.

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Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit CSRM Foundation, the California State Railroad Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Widely regarded as North America's finest and most-visited railroad museum, the complex of facilities includes the 100,000-sq. ft. Railroad History Museum plus the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 1849 Eagle Theatre, and Big Four and Dingley Spice Mill buildings in Old Sacramento. 24-hour info: (916) 445-6645 or www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org

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